

From the PA's Desk

### **Holy Week & Easter Thanks!:**

Thank you to the many people who helped me with all the extras, "behind the scene" activities, getting ready and praying the Liturgies of the Triduum and Easter. Thanks to Joshua and the choir for the many hours they practiced for the past several weeks. Thanks to Fr. Fred for his wonderful preaching. Thanks to all who helped me decorate, and a big thank you to the Catrell Family in particular who not only helped decorate and get ready for the various liturgies, but also were there to serve for each and every one. Special thanks also to Diane and Bob Courter who fashioned the words *He Lives* that you saw nestled in the flowers.

### **Holy Thursday Washing of the Feet:**

The Paschal Triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, is just the beginning of the 50-Day celebration of the Easter Season. What began with the call to "wash the feet" of those we serve, moved to the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the Cross, and climaxed at the Easter Vigil and Sunday Masses, is such a solemn time that it takes 50 days to celebrate it worthily.

It was very moving this Holy Thursday to see so many of our young children coming up with their parents to wash their parent's feet. I believe that the best way to teach about the faith is to actually live its mysteries. Someone once said that "faith is caught more than it is taught," so can you imagine the first-hand experience of these small children doing what they have always perceived the adults doing at church? My mother often used to say that the children will lead them (the adults), and perhaps that is why Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me." It was a moving experience for me to see these little ones doing what their parents have always done for them, and I imagine this was a moving experience for the parents as well.

### **Sacrament of Confirmation:**

This Saturday thirteen second graders and their families celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation by Bishop Cistone at Nativity of the Lord Parish in Alma. They were once again anointed with the Chrism Oil that marked them as they became members of the Church at their baptism. Chrism is the most sacred of our three oils, and whereas the other two oils are blessed, Chrism is consecrated by the bishop of the diocese, and then taken to every church in the bishop's diocese. This is just another way of showing our connection with our main leader and shepherd in the diocese, Bishop Cistone. Chrism has a very special smell to it as it has Balsam added to it to give it a distinctive odor. It is to remind us of the sweet presence of God's Spirit. The name of the oil also speaks of its symbolism. If you take off the "m" on "Chrism," and put on a "t," you find another meaning for the oil. It reminds those anointed that they have Jesus' spirit alive and living within them, and this makes them a manifestation of Jesus' presence in the world. In other words, this is what St. Paul meant when he said: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me." Once we become the reflection and embodiment of Jesus' presence in baptism and confirmation, we are fed with his Body and Blood at the Eucharist, and then we are sent out as his presence in the world for others. Our word "Mass" comes from a Latin phrase which means: "Go, you are sent." What then are we sent as? Perhaps St. Augustine understood it best when he told a new group of the baptized adults at Easter time: "When you go to the Eucharist, receive what you are and become what you receive."

Our 13 newly confirmed children will celebrate their First Eucharist at our masses during the first weekend in May, and in doing so they will complete their Sacraments of Initiation begun at infant baptism. Let us continue to pray for them as they join us around the altar of Jesus Christ as fully initiated Catholic Christians.

### **Gospel Today:**

In today's Gospel we hear the familiar response to Thomas' doubting moment: "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Aren't we all like that from time to time in our journey of faith, and in our coming to see and understand the presence of Jesus in a myriad of life experiences? As I get older and older, I like crosses with the body of Jesus on them, and the more graphic and horrific the image the better. The more I live life, the more I can relate to that broken-body image. We worship the crucified, bleeding One, but so often we draw back in horror from those wounds, that nakedness, that anguish. Yet the place of the wound is the place of healing. That's why Jesus reappears after the resurrection (the resurrected body is different than the earthly body) with the wounds still in his hand, his side, his feet. Jesus tells Thomas to put his hand in them, and in other words, deal with the pain of life, and deal with the fact that human life is filled with brokenness. Often we cannot believe until we put our finger in the wounds—our own, each other's, and the wounds of Christ.

### **Alpha This Week:** Talk 6 – How Does God Guide Us?

#### **Talk summary:**

- In life, we all face decisions, big or small. We are increasingly faced with a vast array of choices and making decisions can be hard. We all need guidance.
- We are not alone in this life – there is a God who desires relationship with us and who also communicates with us.
- It's not always easy to hear God, and sometimes we think we know best, but God's plan is bigger than our mistakes and, in everything, God works for good.
- God has a good plan and a purpose for our lives and it is possible to discern God's will (his guidance) through various ways: Commanding Scripture (Bible), Compelling Spirit (Holy Spirit), Counsel of the Saints (Church/Christian community), Common Sense (Reason), Circumstantial Signs (Providence of God).
- If you walk in this relationship with God, reading (*Commanding Scripture*), listening (*Compelling Spirit*), talking (*Counsel of the Saints*), thinking (*Common Sense*), watching (*Circumstantial Signs*), your life will make a difference. You will have a far bigger impact than probably you will ever realise in this life.

### **Congrats to our new Catholics!**

Congratulations to Aaron Lloyd, Sydney Lloyd, and Natalie Lloyd, who were baptized at the Easter Vigil, and Terry Catrell and Alan Larson who were received into the Church through Confirmation and Eucharist, along with Aaron, Natalie, and Sydney. We, as a community of faith, are blessed to have you join us as a parish family!

### **Maple Syrup Festival Table:**

Since we are looking for various ways to evangelize and spread the Christian message of who we are in this area, during the Maple Syrup Festival, on Saturday from 9am until 7 pm, we will have an evangelization table located in the Atrium of the High School, and our goal is to have literature about our parish (who and what we are) to distribute as people file by for lunch or dinner. I need volunteers to sign up for perhaps one or two hour shifts... to greet people and pass out parish information flyers. If you can help, please let me know.

### **Download the New Parish App:**

St. Vincent de Paul Parish app is now available to download for iPhone and Android smart phones. Stay connected throughout the week with instant notifications, an easy-to-access event calendar, and the ability to quickly reply to or share messages. We still have some work to do on it, but you can download our app today at [myparishapp.com](http://myparishapp.com)